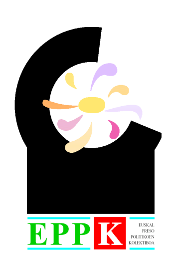


HAMBA KAHLE MADIBA

He breathed his last. A determined, worthy and generous man has died. A man and militant, who inspires all those who are fighting for freedom and against injustice in South Africa and all around the World-He was a soldier, a guide.

Nelson Mandela, Madiba, is a powerful and firm favourite politic model for his admirers as well as for those who have been his enemies. He earned political respect around the world. His example is pointed out and his figure acclaimed everywhere at all times.

Nonetheless, interested flattery should not distort his being for Mandela considered himself as a man of flesh and bones rather than a symbol. He has been committed to a political goal his whole life: he was a freedom fighter and one of the leaders of Umkhonto we Siswe (MK – The spear of the Nation) until he became the President of South Africa. In his hardship, we would like to underline his dignity, generosity and political determination.

His enemies tried to steal his being, his name with a number 466/66. They sentenced him to a life imprisonment after the Rivonia Trial, 27 years of incarceration among which 18 years served in Robben Island Prison.

For us, Madiba is a living memory. South Africa's struggle for freedom and democracy is an important political example to us. We have had the honour to learn from its liberation struggle, a legacy and fulfilling experience. We also value the exchanges about our respective conflicts.

Unlike the South African government of Apartheid, the Spanish and French governments reject all the proposals to the resolving of our Basque political conflict, and this despite the end of the armed struggle by ETA two years ago. We are the hundreds Basque Political Prisoners locked up, taken hostage and scattered in prisons in France, Spain, England, Ireland and Portugal. We are the result of an unresolved political conflict. There are many comrades among us who have spent 30 years in prison (longer sentences than the imprisonment of Mandela but not so well-known) and have been recently released but there are still so many others that remain in prison. This is a good reflection of the harshness of the political conflict concealed by the Spanish and French States.

We, the Basque Politic Prisoners Collective (EPPK), want to praise and pay a tribute to Nelson Mandela, Madiba. We would like to share our mourning with his relatives and friends. Our heart is with them. It is with all those who fought against Apartheid, with those who gave their lives and served long years in prison for freedom. We have all lost a great man, but win a great source of inspiration.

Long live Mandela's legacy!
Long live the freedom fighters of the world!
Amnesty, Self-determination!

EPPK, The Basque Politic Prisoners Collective

The Basque Country in our hearts, December 2013.